COMIC SHOP NEWS™

1155

Heroes reimagined by comics superstar

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

THE RED CIRCLE

FOUR THRILLING ONE-SHOTS
AUGUST 2009

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Red Circle Gets the Green Light at DC

This month, *J. Michael Straczynski* will introduce readers to his new interpretations of some of comics' oldest heroes when DC launches its new Red Circle line with a quartet of JMS-written one-shots. Then, beginning in September, the four superheroes will appear in a pair of monthly titles featuring two stories in each issue: ***The Shield*** (with Inferno appearing in a co-feature) and ***The Web*** (with the Hangman appearing in a co-feature). While Straczynski isn't writing the ongoing projects, his kickoff oneshots and his accompanying notes provide a clear direction for the books that follow.

Eric Trautmann, the writer of ***The Shield***, explained that it was JMS's new take on comics' first patriotic hero that attracted him to the project. "I like the idea of the character a bit more than how he's been used in the past," Trautmann said. "Obviously, he's a character with history and that appeals to me–he's got all that great, resonating imagery, but my exposure to the really old Red Circle stuff is minimal. It's too hard to find.

"When the Impact line reintroduced the character years ago, I read those and liked them, but I must confess to being more enamored of some of the other Impact books..."

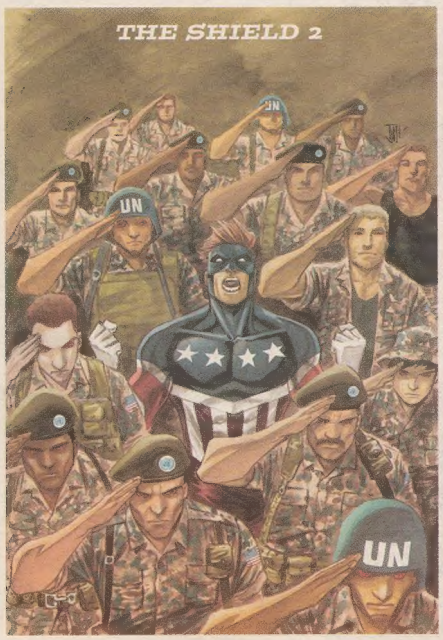
What makes The Shield more than just a Captain America knock-off (even though the character's first appearance actually predates Cap's!)? "The primary difference is, to my mind, that Cap, Steve Rogers, anyhow, is very much of his period; he's still a mid-20th century man; Joe Higgins, the Shield, is a contemporary man, without the years of history behind him that Cap has.

"He's also still an active duty military officer, and I intend to write him as such. He's a superhero, sure, but with a specific mind-set that's a but different from Cap's, I think... He's a symbolic hero, for sure, and that's a symbol for his own countrymen, but also as a living embodiment of the American ideal abroad, as well...

"Higgins has a certain vested interest in the Shield identity; there's also the fact that he's an American military officer, and he's been given, essentially, orders to fill this role. He's a good soldier, so he's going to follow those orders."

The Shield's backup co-star is Inferno, whose exploits are written by *Brandon Jerwa*. According to the writer, the concept he was initially given was straightforward. "The basic directive was 'Jason Bourne on fire,' and I was tasked with turning it into a fast-paced action thriller. I'm a big fan of that genre, so I'm digging in deep and doing my best to take it to the level it deserves.

While Straczynski had prepared a bible for each character, Jerwa didn't have access to that info when he put together his initial Inferno proposal. "I wrote my pitch with only the script for the Inferno chapter of JMS' mini-series; I didn't have the additional notes that clarified his intent in terms of the bigger picture. The pitch I turned in did something pretty drastically different from what JMS intended, but my basic over-arcing story was still compatible with that unseen information, so Rachel gave me the scoop and asked me to re-jigger things a bit. One more pass, and we were good to go."



Originally Inferno was a circus fire breather and a criminal who with the help of Steel Sterling turns his life around. How does this Inferno turn his life around? "This is definitely a tale of discovery and redemption, but it's about as far away from fire-breathing circus performers as you can get," Jerwa said. "I can't say too much at the outset, but let's just say that Inferno can't turn his life around until he figures out what his life is exactly."

Right off the bat, Jerwa brings in some major guest-stars: Green Arrow and Black Canary. How'd they become a part of the tale? "It was my choice to use them, as it's logical to the story," Jerwa said. "It didn't really hinder things at all...and can I just say how exciting it was to write those two in my first script? I mean, come on – it's Ollie and Dinah!"

How closely linked to the DCU are the Red Circle character? "They are definitely in the DCU, and we'll be playing with that a bit, while still keeping their stories individualized. In fact, Eric and I are exploring some connections between the worlds of our characters as well, so I think it's going to be a really rewarding experience for the readers."

The other Red Circle title, ***The Web***, will feature art by *Roger Robinson*, who illustrates both the JMS oneshot and the ongoing series. "I remember reading ***The Web*** when it came out through DC Comics' imprint Impact Comics and it was pretty good," Robinson said. "*J. Michael Straczynski* is giving a really cool spin on the Web. I think the readers are going to like it."

The series' star is a billionaire who has everything one could want.. except for compassion, which is his brother's forte. Tired of seeing his brother get all the recognition, billionaire John Raymond sets out to purchase his place in the spotlight by buying himself a superheroic identity. However, his plans go awry when a dark fate befalls his brother, forcing John Raymond to learn the true price of heroism.

The high-tech costume that Raymond funds isn't just another spandex suit. "I reworked it more so part of the webbing of the costume worked around his muscle structure so the design of his costume would have some dimension to it," Robinson said. He gave the costume a carbon-fiber look, figuring that's the sort of protective super-suit a billionaire might want. "I was thinking in terms that, if I designed the character for a video game or a movies, how would the texturing of his costume look?" Robinson said. "Ever since working in the video games, I approach character designs in terms of design, texture, and functionality and how they work together now." He also gave him goggles—and not just for looks. "The Web's goggles are functional and he does use it for night vision and infrared heat signature," Robinson said.

The Web's backup feature, the Hangman, is written by *John Rozum*, who admits that he knew very little about the character before landing the assignment. "Aside from having seen some of the covers, I didn't know much about the character prior to taking on this project. This was probably for the best since the character had been stripped down, streamlined, and restructured by *Joe Straczynski*. With no real familiarity with the original character, I was not conflicted with trying to make the new character mesh with any affection I might have had for the old... I essentially took what he did and used that as a starting point and began developing new ideas and creating a mythology for the Hangman which will eventually explain the source of his powers and his place in the Universe."

The new Hangman is a Union doctor who returns after his own hanging, charged with saving other innocents from a fate similar to his own... and hastening the deaths of the guilty. But this isn't the story of a Civil War-era man out of his place in time. "He's made every effort to not stand out, and to change with the times," Rozum said. "Obviously, some social changes were probably more difficult for him to cope with than others, but he's lived through all of the years between the 1830s and the present. He's not simply a displaced visitor from another time.

"What makes his life most difficult, in any time period, is having to adjust his life to accommodate his automatic transformations into the Hangman at sunset and back into Robert Dickering at sunrise. He has some issues with being human, yet apart from humanity, and a reluctance to become close to anyone, even though Dickering is a friendly, emotive, and romantically inclined individual."

How does the Hangman differ from the Spectre, whose mission seems quite similar? "That was one of the first questions I had, and the answers were something I had to work out, so it's something that will be addressed in the series," Rozum said. "There are numerous differences, but in a nutshell, the Hangman always offers retribution first. He uses his powers to scare those he sees as being on a path to damnation into giving up their evil ways and going straight. In some cases this is enough. For others, if they don't heed his one and only warning...it's something you'll be able to witness first hand early in the series.

"Unlike the Spectre, the Hangman's other half, Robert Dickering, has a life of his own, and none of the powers of the Hangman. Unlike other characters with that dichotomy where they transform into another identity driven, or cursed, with a task to perform, Dickering is also under that same curse. Just as the Hangman must go out and aid the innocent and punish the guilty, Dickering must labor all day saving the innocent as well."

The Shield #1, a 40-page $3.99 comic featuring two stories in each issue, is scheduled for September 9th release. ***The Web #1***, also a 40-page $3.99 comic with two features in each issue, follows on September 23rd.

by Rik Offenberger (with Cliff Biggers)

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

CSNsider

•Dark Horse has landed the rights to produce comics based on ***Mass Effect***, Bioware's hit SF Xbox 360 videogame. ***Mass Effect: Redemption*** takes readers through the treacherous events leading up to ***Mass Effect 2*** which opens with galactic hero Commander Shepard having mysteriously gone missing. The series is written by Bioware lead writer *Mac Walters*, scripted by *John Jackson Miller*, and illustrated by *Omar Francia*. "Those familiar with Mass Effect are aware that it offers one of the deepest and most compelling universes in the history of space adventure," Dark Horse President and Publisher *Mike Richardson* said. "We have a long history of successfully adapting properties such as ***Aliens***, ***Star Wars***, and ***Serenity*** into comics, and we feel that ***Mass Effect*** has tremendous potential with regard to graphic storytelling."

•And while we're talking videogames and comics, why not mention that WildStorm deal that has them producing a miniseries based on Visceral Games' ***Dante's Inferno***. The game, which is set in the medieval author's nine circles of hell, is one of 2010's most highly anticipated action/adventure games. In addition to the game itself and the comic book series, Starz/Film Roman is producing a feature-length ***Dante's Inferno*** animated anthology like the ***Animatrix*** with a number of different episodes produced by different Japanese and Korean animation studios. The comic book series, which launches in December, will be produced by *Christos Gage & Diego Latorre*.

•Dynamite Entertainment has landed the rights to produce comics based on MGM's ***Stargate*** television franchise. "***Stargate*** is truly a crown jewel when it comes to episodic science fiction television," Dynamite President

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Nick Barrucci said. "Just in time for the ***Stargate Universe*** series debuting in October, Dynamite will create an adventure series that retailers and fans alike will love. We have three separate launches planned, each designed to focus on the characters and attention coming the way of both the new show and ***Stargate SG-1*** and ***Stargate Atlantis***!" Contributors to the projects will include *John Watson*, *Dave Dorman*, *Chuck Dixon* (who will supply a prequel to ***Stargate Universe***), Doug Murray (with continuing stories of ***Stargate Atlantis***), and Brandon Jerwa (who will write new tales of ***Stargate SG-1***). Dynamite will launch the line with ***Stargate #0***, featuring a short tale from each of the three series in a single $1 comic.

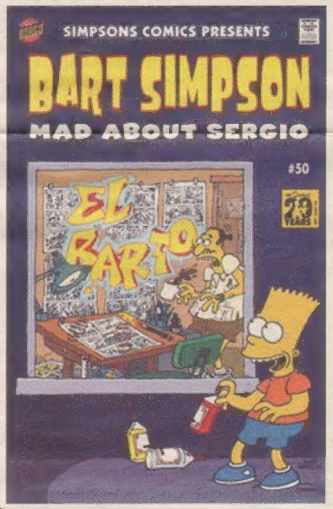
•***Vietnam Journal***, *Don Lomax's* Harvey-nominated 16-issue tale of a war journalist's experiences during the war in 'Nam, is coming back to comics shops in a series of collected volumes from Transfuzion Publishing. "***Vietnam Journal*** epitomizes what I want to do with Transfuzion," said publisher *Gary Reed*, "in that it presents great material which is made available to new audiences, both in the comics market and outside the traditional market." ***Vietnam Journal #1***, a 140-page trade paperback, is slated for October release.

•***Ultimate Comics Spider-Man*** series artist *David LaFuente* will supply the art for a previously-unannounced black and white cover variant edition of ***Ultimate Comics Spider-Man #1***, limited to only 3 copies per store. Check with the folks at your friendly neighborhood comic shop for info on price and availability—or look for it on the shelves next week, if it doesn't sell out before release!

•***Punisher #s 8 & 9*** will be offered in special "Rest in Pieces" variant editions. Check with the friendly folks at your comic shop for price and availability info on this 1-for-15 edition. #8 is slated for August 19th release, #9 for September 16t release.

•*Ronald Reagan* gets his own Bluewater biography this October. ***Political Power: Ronald Reagan***, written by *Don Smith* with art by *Scott Woodward*, will focus on the two-term President seen by many as the most influential Republican of the 20th Century.

•Not only will acclaimed cartoonist *Sergio Aragones* become a regular contributor to Bongo's ***Bart Simpson*** title beginning with #50, he'll actually be the *only* contributor to that particular issue. Aragones will both write and draw every story in that issue; afterwards, he will contribute to this title and other Bongo books on a regular basis. "Sergio's the best," *Matt Groening*, Bongo Comics founder and publisher, said, "and it's an honor to work with him."



•Yen Press has landed the rights to produce graphic novels based on *Stephanie Meyer's* ***Twilight*** series. Korean illustrator *Young Kim* will supply the art, while Meyer is closely supervising and approving every page of the graphic novel.

•Readers who have gone accustomed to seeing ***Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady* in the pages of ***CSN*** take note: Brady has left ***Newsarama*** after almost a decade. "Needless to say, ***Newsarama*** will go on without me, in the capable hands of *Mike Doran* and *Lucas Siegel*, who's stepped up to do a lot more for the site," Brady posted at **newsarama.com**. "As for me? I may be around. I've got some ideas I want to play with, and some may just pan out. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to reading comics hopefully with a different eye now – not one looking for the news angle of any given issue, storyline or creator, but one that's back to reading comics for the love of them."

Back to Press

•***Gotham City Sirens #1*** (JUN098042, in stores August 12th with a recolored version of the *Guillem March* cover).

•***Red Robin #2*** (JUN098041, in stores August 12th with a recolored version of the *Francis Manapul* cover).

•***X-Men Legacy #226*** (JUN098010, in stores August 19th).

•***War of the Marvels Must-Have*** (JUN098012, an extra-length volume reprinting ***Ms. Marvel #s 39-41***).

Coming Comics—DC in October

Superboy's looking for Lex Luthor in *Geoff Johns & Francis Manapul's* ***Adventure Comics #3***. He can't find Luthor on his own, and he needs help from his best friend Tim Drake, a.k.a. Robin. But the boys' reunion isn't all smiles and hugs, as Conner discovers that Tim

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

THAT'S WHY I HAVE ANOTHER OF MY TENTACLES IN POSITION--
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EDITORS Cliff Biggers, Ward Batty

Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
wbatty@csnsider.com

www.csnsider.com

has been hiding a great many secrets from the newly returned Boy of Steel... secrets that could destroy their friendship.

Dr. Jeremiah Arkham has rebuilt the Asylum following the design of his mad Uncle Amadeus. Intended as a model for enlightened treatment of mental illness, the building soon mutates into a torture house, and the inmates find themselves trapped in a living hell in the three-issue ***Arkham Reborn*** by *David Hine & Jeremy Haun*.

The all-new Batgirl gets a new look and a new costume in ***Batgirl #3*** by *Bryan Q. Miller, Lee Garbett, & Trevor Scott*. She's ready to join Batman and Robin in their war on crime... problem is, she hasn't told them anything about it yet!

Judd Winick, Mark Bagley, & Rob Hunter wrap up their Two-Face story arc in ***Batman #691***, paving the way for *Tony Daniel* to begin his run as writer and artist beginning with ***Batman #692*** in a tale that guest-stars Catwoman and the Huntress and features the return of Gotham City's most notorious crime family.

A murdered priest. A desecrated grave marker. A kidnapped child. A secret key. A mystery whose solution could upset the world order. To end a killer's mad scheme, Batman faces Azrael, Death's Dark Knight, in *Fabian Nicieza, J. Calafiore, & Mark McKenna's* ***Batman Annual #27***, with the saga continuing into Nicieza and *Tom Mandrake's* ***Detective Annual #11***. And those tales pave the way for Nicieza & *Ramon Bachs'* ***Azrael #1***, the debut issue of an all-new series staring Michael Lane, the new Azrael.

Batman and Robin find themselves at cross-purposes with another Dynamic Duo—Red Hood and Scarlet—in *Grant Morrison, Philip Tan, & Jonathan Glapion's* ***Batman & Robin #5***.

In ***Batman: Streets of Gotham #5***, *Chris Yost & Dustin Nguyen* pair the Huntress with an unlikely partner: Man-Bat!

Doug Moench & Kelley Jones reunite to introduce the newest member of Batman's rogues gallery in ***Batman: The Unseen***, a twice-monthly, five-issue miniseries. Horrible and unexplained murders have Gotham City held captive.According to witnesses, the killer is a weird, skinless "meat-man" who seems to fade away after the crimes.

Aquaman, the New Teen Titans, and Deathstroke guest-star in *Kevin Smith & Walter Flanagan's* ***Batman: Widening Gyre #3***—and Batman finally learns the name of his mysterious masked ally.

The secrets behind the Blackest Night are revealed in *Geoff Johns, Ivan Reis, & Oclair Albert's* ***Blackest Night #4***, the latest issue of

DC's biggest event of 2009. While Earth is evacuated, Hal Jordan embarks on a brave journey to the darkest depths to uncover the truth behind the Black Lanterns—and you won't believe what he uncovers...

Black Lantern Psycho-Pirate shares his pain with the citizens of Smallville in *James Robinson, Eddy Barrows, & Ruy Jose's* ***Blackest Night: Superman***. Will any Kryptonians come to the rescue? And could the key to taking down this menace lie within the Medusa Mask?

The stunning conclusion arrives! Batman and Robin, aided by Deadman, try to defend Gotham City against the onslaught of Black Lanterns. But how do you defeat an enemy whose only goal is to feed off the emotions of a city and eat the hearts of all that stand in their way? Find out in *Peter J. Tomasi & Adrian Syaf's* ***Blackest Night: Batman#3***.

In *J.T. Krul, Ed Benes, & Rob Hunter's* ***Blackest Night: Titans #3***, the few remaining Titans face their dead former teammates who have now become Black Lanterns! Meanwhile, one Titan discovers a secret weapon...but at what price?

J. Michael Straczynski & Jesus Saiz send Barry Allen into the past in ***Brave & Bold #28***, where he crosses paths with the Blackhawks in WWII. But Barry isn't the Flash they know, and he's not even the kind of hero they need to help fight history's most grueling war.

The 80-page ***DCU Halloween Special 2009*** features thirteen spooky-seasonal tales starring Guy Gardner, Red Robin, Bizarro, and many others.

Batwoman's origin tale begins in ***Detective Comics #858*** by *Greg Rucka & JH Williams III*.

The war between the Blue Lanterns and Agent Orange implodes as the universe darkens in ***Green Lantern #47*** by *Geoff Johns, Doug Mahnke, & Christian Alamy*, a ***Blackest Night*** tie-in. But a strange turn will send this epic battle in an unexpected direction when Larfleeze has something he desperately hordes taken away from him!

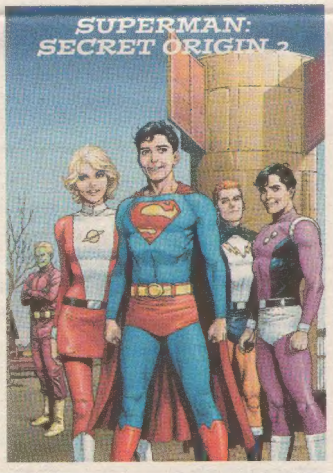
The intense and horrific battle between the Green Lantern Corps and the Black Lanterns on Oa takes a turn for the worse in *Peter Tomasi, Patrick Gleason, & Rebecca Buchman's* ***Green Lantern Corps #41***. The Corps realizes that the abominable, ultimate goal of the Black Lanterns is not only to feed off the Corps' emotions, but to consume and decimate the main power battery and destroy Oa forever!

Jameson Robinson & Mark Bagley sign on as the new creative team for DC's flagship superteam in ***Justice League of America #38***. It all begins as a one-time member of the JLA falls before he can warn the team of looming peril while what's left of the JLA journeys to the heart of their past to decide if the team has any future at all. Of course, that means this is the best time for a savage villain from the team's past to attack the demoralized heroes! It's the start of a spanking new odyssey for the JLA that will lead in the coming months to a fresh line-up.

The REBELS take on one of the Silver Age's oldest villains in ***REBELS Annual: Starro the Conqueror #1***, by *Tony Bedard, Kalman Andrasofszky, Derec Donovan, Joe Prado, & Karl Moline*. The origin of the real Starro the Conqueror is revealed! Why have we never seen this cosmic barbarian before? And how did he amass his horde of super-soldiers? The stellar answers are all in here!

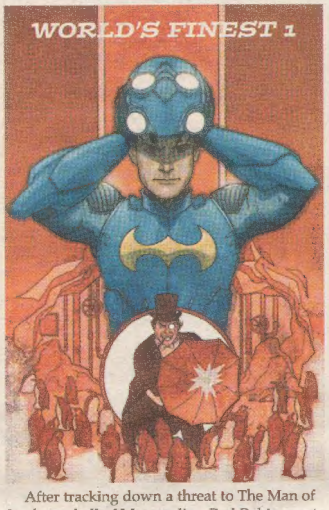
Ra's al Ghul goes from hunter to hunted as the Council of Spiders target him for execution in ***Red Robin #5*** by *Chris Yost & Ramon Bachs*.

Geoff Johns & Gary Frank's exploration of the origin of the greatest superhero of all time continues in ***Superman: Secret Origin #2***. This issue spotlights young Clark Kent's initial journey into the late 30th century as Superboy and see how meeting the Legion of Super-Heroes shapes the Superman he will one day become. Plus, more on the beginnings of the young Lex Luthor.



Peter Johnson, Matt Cherniss, & Rafael Albuquerque present a Halloweenesque tale in ***Superman/Batman #65***.

Warlord creator/writer *Mike Grell* picks up the pencil to illustrate a two-parter that begins in ***Warlord #7***. Lost in the ruins of a savage city and protecting a girl he doesn't know, the Warlord can't even remember his own name!



After tracking down a threat to The Man of Steel – and all of Metropolis – Red Robin must team up with the new Kryptonian Nightwing to end this mysterious threat and rescue Flamebird in ***World's Finest***, a four-part series by *Sterling Gates & Julian Lopez*. But is all this just a red herring to distract the heroes from an even bigger threat to Gotham City and New Krypton

DC collected editions include:

- ***Batman: Battle for the Cowl Companion TP***, collecting five ***Battle for the Cowl*** specials.
- ***Batman: Private Casebook TP***, collecting ***Detective #s 840-845*** plus a story from the ***DC Infinite Halloween Special***.
- ***Black Lightning Year One TP***, collecting the six-issue limited series.
- ***DC Comics Classics Library: Shazam!—The Monster Society of Evil HC***, collecting the serialized story from the Golden Age ***Captain Marvel Adventures #s 22-46***.
- ***The Flash Vs. The Rogues TP***, collecting a number of *John Broome-Carmine Infantino* Silver Age ***Flash*** classic tales.
- ***Justice League International Volume 3 TP***, collecting ***Justice League International #s 23-25 & Justice League America #s 26-30***.

•***Justice Society of America: Thy Kingdom Come Part 2 TP***, collecting ***Justice Society of America #s 13-18***.
•***Outsiders: The Deep TP***, collecting ***Batman & the Outsiders Special #1*** and ***Outsiders #s 15-20***.
•***Robin Archives Volume 2 HC***, collecting Golden Age Robin tales from ***Star Spangled Comics #s 86-105***.
•***Showcase Presents DC Comics Presents—Superman Team-Ups Volume One TP***, collecting ***DC Comics Presents #s 1-26***.
•***The Spirit Book 4 TP***, collecting ***Spirit #s 21-25***.
•***Supergirl: Who Is Super-Woman? TP***, collecting ***Supergirl #s 34 & 37-42***.
•***Superman/Batman: The Search for Kryptonite TP***, collecting ***Superman/Batman #s 44-49***.

Coming Comics—WildStorm/DC in October

Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson turn the spotlight on Astra Furst, the third-generation superhero of Astro City, in ***Astro City: Astra Special #s 1 & 2***. Last we saw her, she was a 10-year-old girl playing hopscotch. Today she's graduating from college. It's a time of friends and family, new opportunities, new dangers, and changing relationships.

At long last, *Warren Ellis & John Cassaday* bring to a close their saga of the WildStorm Universe's defenders against the bizarre and unexplained in ***Planetary #27***. Prepare for answers to be revealed as the enigmatic Elijah Snow has one last errand to run!

Marv Wolfman & Kevin Sharpe bring the hit Playstation game to comics in ***God of War #1***. Find out what makes Kratos a God of War in this fascinating backstory that paves the way for the upcoming third release in the videogame series.

WildStorm collected editions include:
•***Ex Machina Deluxe Edition Volume 2 HC***, collecting ***Ex Machina #s 12-20 & Special #s 1 & 2***.
•***The Winter Men TP***, collecting ***Winter Men #s 1-5 & Winter Special***.
•***The X-Files TP***, collecting the seven-part miniseries that serves as a "lost season" of the cult-fave TV series.

Coming Comics—Vertigo/DC in October

Matthew Sturges, Peter Milligan, Matt Wagner, Bill Willingham, Giuseppi Camuncoli, Amy Reeder Hadley, Kevin Nowlan, Mike Allred, and others join forces for ***House of Mystery Halloween Annual #1***, a 48-page special that features a framing sequence by the regular creative team and a series of short stories featuring such Vertigo mainstays as John Constantine, Madame Xanadu, and Merv Pumpkinhead.

Simon Bisley supplies the interior art for ***Hellblazer #260***, a *Peter Milligan* tale that finds John Constantine targeted by a London crime boss bent on revenge.

Vertigo collected editions include:
•***Air Volume 2: Flying Machine TP***, collecting ***Air #s 6-10***.
•***Hellblazer: Scab TP***, collecting ***Hellblazer #s 251-255*** and a story from #250.
•***Shade the Changing Man Volume 2: The Edge of Vision TP***, collecting ***Shade #s 7-13*** (and at the same time, Vertigo will offer a new printing of ***Shade Volume 1***).

Coming Comics—CMX/DC in October

A detective goes undercover to learn the truth about the mysterious death of a teacher in ***Deka Kyoshi Volume 1***. But his job is made tougher by Makoto, a troubled young student who can actually see the demons inside of people.

A prince hoping to avoid an arranged marriage to a princess he never met makes a deal for his brother to take his place, figuring it'll scare the princess off. However, things go wrong when they hit it off... and the situation is even more complicated when the brother falls under a spell that will turn him into a lizard once he's done posing as his brother! See what happens next in ***The Lizard Prince Volume 1*** by *Asuka Izumi*.

Coming in March 2010 from DC Direct

DC Direct ventures into resin display pieces with ***Gotham City Stories Part One: Batman***, sculpted by *Joseph Menna*. This highly detailed resin rendition of Batman is designed to hang on the wall or be displayed on a desk or display shelf. Each piece in the series tells a story on its own—and when multiple pieces of the series are displayed together, new and different stories emerge. Upcoming pieces spotlight ***Catwoman***, ***The Joker***, and ***Harley Quinn***.

Selina Kyle becomes the latest addition to the popular 1:6 scale figure line with the ***Classic Catwoman 1:6 Scale Deluxe Collector Figure***. Dressed in one of the most recognizable costumes in her history – the purple catsuit – Catwoman also comes with accessories including a whip, a diamond in a bag and extra sets of hands.

DC's line of dynamic sculptures continues with ***DC Dynamics: Aquaman Statue*** sculpted by *Tim Bruckner*. In this striking piece, Aquaman, King of the Seven Seas, rises from the depths on the crest of a brilliant blue tidal wave, trident in hand.

Blackest Night continues—and so does the line of ***Blackest Night Action Figures***. ***Series 3*** features ***Aquaman (Black Lantern)***, ***Arisia***, ***Larfleeze*** (who comes with the slain and slavish Glomulus), and ***Star Sapphire***.

Designer *Walter O'Neal* and sculptor *Ray Villafane* join forces for ***DC Classic Confrontations: Batman Vs Killer Croc Statue***, which depicts Croc bursting through a manhole as Batman swings into action to stop him before he wreaks vengeance on the citizens of Gotham.

Gary Frank's art is the inspiration for the ***Heroes of the DC Universe: Shazam! Bust***, sculpted by *Jean St. Jean*. The World's Mightiest Mortal is featured in a blaze of power atop a base of The Seven Deadly Sins – trapped in stone.

World of Warcraft Series 6 includes lavishly designed action figures of ***Goblin Tinker: Gibzz Sparklighter***, ***Dwarven King: Magni Bronzebeard***, and ***Forsaken Queen: Sylvanas Windrunner***.

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in October

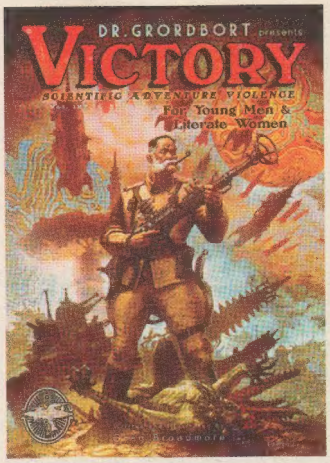
JP Kaloni tells the story of an Edo-era swordsman's quest for survival and enlightenment in ***365 Samurai & a Few Bowls of Rice***, a 392-page graphic novel told entirely in full-page panels. When Ningen leaves his dojo at the request of his master to travel the world and grow as a swordsman, he embarks on a journey that becomes a metaphor for the cycle of life.

Mike Mignola & John Arcudi introduce the first full-length book by new art talent *Patric Reynolds* in ***Abe Sapien***, a 40-page oneshot that follows Abe as he investigates a haunting following the death of a young boy. What he finds is far stranger and more deadly.

In celebration of Casper's sixtieth anniversary, Dark Horse presents ***Casper the Friendly Ghost 60th Anniversary***, an 80-page hardcover facsimile edition of two classic Golden Age comics in meticulously restored full color. Beginning with Archer St. John's 1949 first issue of ***Casper the Friendly Ghost***, this sixtieth-anniversary edition continues with Harvey Comics' premier edition of ***Casper*** from 1952.

Joe R. Lansdale's "The Curse" is the lead story in ***Creepy #2***, which also features work from *Jason Shawn Alexander, Dan Braun, Greg Ruth,* and more.

If you ever got a glimpse of those stunning steampunk ray guns designed for Dark Horse by WETA, then you'll have to have ***Doctor Grordbort Presents: Victory—Scientific Adventure Violence for Young Men and Literary Women***, a 64-page hardcover presenting some of the world's most progressive armaments and weaponry. Written and illustrated by WETA Workshop Conceptual Designer *Greg Broadmore*, this book sumptuously details a science-fiction history that never was. Harkening back to the classic sci-fi serials of yesteryear, it reveals the backstories and mythos of Weta Limited's highly limited ray gun collectible line.



For over thirty years, the fantasy art of *Charles Vess* has been acclaimed worldwide, his rich palette, striking compositions, and lavish detail second to none in the field. Embodying the timeless approach of the golden age of illustration, Vess's work recalls an era when paint and brush were the vessels that carried readers of all ages to distant lands, bygone ages, and realms of the imagination. And you can see just how well Vess steers those vessels in the 200-page ***Drawing Down the Moon: The Art of Charles Vess HC***.

Mark Evanier & Sergio Aragones unleash Groo upon an unsuspecting world once again in ***Groo: The Hogs of Hordor***, a four-part miniseries that pits Groo against an evil species that has existed forever, and that spreads death and annihilation to this day. They control your mind, they control your body, and worst of all, they control your money. So what happens when Groo comes nose to nose with them?

The Fat Fury gets his own toy at last! The ***Herbie Vinyl Figure*** is a 7" limited edition replica of Herbie Popnecker in all his lollipop-eating glory, limited to 1000 copies.

Dark Horse presents material by *Joss Whedon, Mike Mignola, Farel Dalrymple,* and many others in ***MySpace Dark Horse Presents Volume 4 TP***, the first volume featuring online ***Star Wars*** material.

Dark Horse's line of Simpsons syroco-style figures continues with ***The Simpsons Classic***

WOLVERINE'S IN TROUBLE!
I'VE GOTTA FIND HIM!
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Character #5: Comic Book Guy, offered in a limited edition of 550 numbered pieces. Each sculpture is packaged in a special litho-printed, full-color tin box with a vintage-style pin-back button and booklet.

Joss Whedon & Fabio Moon's ***Sugarshock***, originally presented as a part of MySpace Dark Horse Presents, sees print this fall in a forty-page oneshot. ***Sugarshock*** tells the story of a rock band led by charismatic but crazy Dandelion Naizen, a hyperactive singer/songwriter possessed of a mean hatred of Vikings (don't ask) and a mission for a secret government agency that may only exist in her head. But when her band, which includes a robot bass player, is enlisted in an intergalactic battle of the bands—emphasis on battle—Dandelion gets to prove herself as both singer and soldier.

Stain Boy, the smudgy lad who just can't stay clean, returns to the Dark Horse line with the release of the ***Tim Burton Stain Boy Vinyl Figure***, a 5.5" figure packaged in a full-color window box.

Take a gander at the latest offering in the ***Uncle Scrooge*** line of syroco-style statues! ***Uncle Scrooge Classic Character #5: Gladstone Gander*** will be presented in a 650 numbered copy edition. Each sculpture is packaged in a special litho-printed, full-color tin box with a vintage-style pin-back button and booklet.

Dark Horse collected volumes include:

- ***The Chronicles of Kull Volume 1: A King Comes Riding & Other Stores TP***, collecting every Marvel color Kull comic from the 1970s and 1980s in chronological order.
- ***The Chronicles of Solomon Kane TP***, a compilation of every Marvel color Solomon Kane comics from the 1970s and 1980s in chronological order.
- ***Criminal Macabre: Cell Block 666***, collecting the limited series by *Steve Niles & Nick Stakal*.
- ***Eerie Archives Volume 3 HC***, collecting ***Eerie #s 11-15***, featuring work by *Jeff Jones, Wally Wood, Gene Colan, Archie Goodwin, Johnny Craig*, and more.
- ***Electropolis TP***, collecting the miniseries by *Dean Motter*.
- ***The Escapists TP***, a softcover compilation of the series by *Brian K. Vaughan, Jason Shawn Alexander, Michael Chabon*, and others.
- ***The Goon Volume 6: Chinatown & the Mystery of Mr. Wicker TP***, a softcover edition of the original graphic novel by *Eric Powell*.
- ***Grendel: Behold the Devil HC***, collecting *Matt Wagner's* latest Grendel series, supplemented with pages previously seen only on MySpace.
- ***Little Lulu: Miss Feeny's Polly & Other Stories TP***, a full-color compilation of classic Lulu tales by *John Stanley & Irving Tripp* originally presented in ***Little Lulu #s 100-105***.
- ***Nexus Archives Volume 10 HC***, collecting *Nexus v2 #s 58-65*.
- ***Robert E. Howard Chronicles Slipcase Set***, presenting three REH collections starring Conan, Solomon Kane, and Kull.
- ***Tarzan Archives: The Jesse Marsh Years Volume 4 HC***, collecting the hard-to-find Dell ***Tarzan #s 17-22*** by *Gaylord DuBois* and acclaimed clean-line illustrator *Jess Marsh*.

Coming Comics—Marvel in October

Who was Ben Reilly? That's the question that *Marc Guggenheim, Marco Checchetto, & Luke Ross* explore beginning in ***Amazing Spider-Man #608***. Raptor is back for revenge against the man he claims killed his family – Ben Reilly, the clone of Spider-Man! Unfortunately, the only person alive that fits Ben's description is Peter Parker!

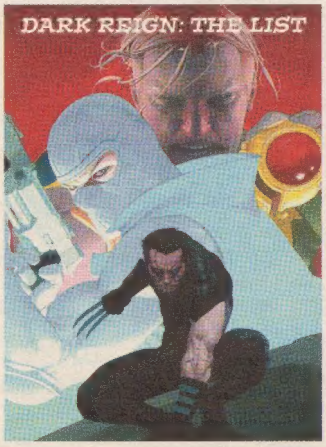
Anita Blake's war against a voodoo priestess continues in ***Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter—The Laughing Corpse: Executioner #1*** by *Laurell K. Hamilton, Jessica Ruffner, & Ron Lim*.

While Steve Roger remains lost in time, Dr. Doom and the Red Skull make a pact that could destroy what Captain America means. See the scope of their scheme in ***Captain America Reborn #4*** by *Ed Brubaker, Bryan Hitch, & Butch Guice*.

Paul Jenkins presents a tale of the legacy of Captain America from the first Independence Day to the present in ***Captain America: Theater of War—Ghosts of My Country***, the final ***Theater of War*** oneshot.

Andy Diggle & Roberto De La Torre launch a new chapter in Matt Murdock's life in ***Daredevil #501***.

Ares – the God of War! His relentless brutality and his bloodthirsty drive to attain victory at any cost earned him only scorn from his fellow gods in the Greek pantheon, and exile from Olympus. But Norman Osborn not only welcomes him, but he has charged Ares with hand-picking an elite squad of soldiers and beating them into the hardest, sharpest warriors ever to wield an M-60 in each hand. Witness what happens next in ***Dark Avengers: Ares #1*** by *Kieron Gillen & Cary Nord*.



Norman Osborn's Machiavellian scheme to control the nation is at the center of a quartet of ***Dark Reign: The List*** oneshots in October. *Jonathan Hickman & Ed McGuinness* reveal just would would force Osborn to seek Nick Fury's assistance in ***Dark Reign: The List—Secret Warriors***. *Rick Remender & John Romita Jr.* follow Osborn's effort to eliminate Frank Castle in ***Dark Reign: The List—Punisher***. Banner and Skaar face Osborn's deadliest femme fatales in *Greg Pak & Ben Oliver's* ***Dark Reign: The List—Hulk***. And Logan sets out to stop Osborn's efforts to gain control of the Weapon Plus program in *Jason Aaron & Esad Ribic's* ***Dark Reign: The List—Wolverine***.

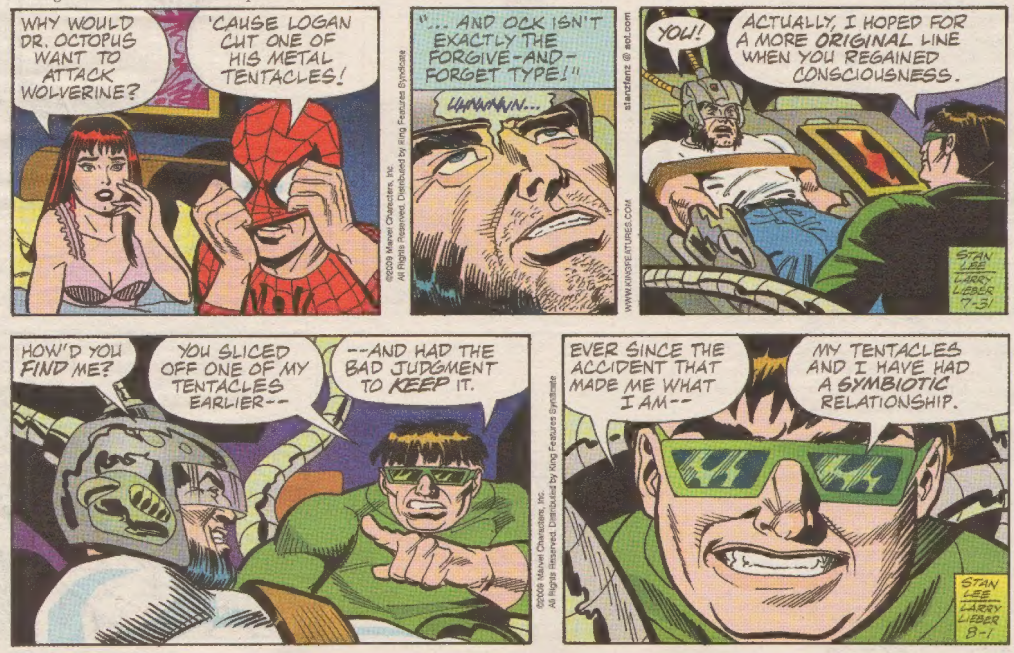
The legacy numbering trend continues with ***Deadpool #900*** by *Jason Aaron, Mike Benson, Charlie Huston, Joe Kelly, Kyle Baker, Rob Liefeld*, and many more. Okay, we know that Deadpool's comic book run is nowhere near 900 issues... but what's an error of a few hundred issues when you're having fun?

Jericho Drumm assumes his role as Marvel's new Sorcerer Supreme in ***Doctor Voodoo: Avenger of the Supernatural #1*** by *Rick Remender* and The Artist Whose Name Cannot Be Revealed Right Now. But is Doctor Voodoo ready for the momentous duty as avenger of the supernatural?

Hercules faces of against Thor in ***Incredible Hercules #s 136 & 137*** by *Fred Van Lente, Greg Pak, Reilly Brown, & Rodney Buchemi*. The Odinson discovers the Lion of Olympus has been impersonating him and he's out to prove nothing beats the original!

Banner and Skaar finally come fist-to-claw with Logan and Daken in ***Incredible Hulk #603*** by *Greg Pak & Ariel Olivetti*. But will the battle royale come down to Wolverines versus Hulks – or fathers versus sons?

Deep within a secret government base beneath the arctic tundra lies the "Ark": a vault containing the genetic codes for all life on Earth. But there's a problem—a rogue Artificial Intelligence has decided that the best way to protect the samples is to eradicate every living


WHY WOULD DR. OCTOPUS WANT TO ATTACK WOLVERINE?
'CAUSE LOGAN CUT ONE OF HIS METAL TENTACLES!
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"... AND OCK ISN'T EXACTLY THE FORGIVE-AND-FORGET TYPE!"
UHHHHN...
stanzfenz @ aol.com
WWW.KINGFEATURES.COM
YOU!
ACTUALLY, I HOPED FOR A MORE ORIGINAL LINE WHEN YOU REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 7-31
HOW'D YOU FIND ME?
YOU SLICED OFF ONE OF MY TENTACLES EARLIER--
--AND HAD THE BAD JUDGMENT TO KEEP IT.
©2009 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate
EVER SINCE THE ACCIDENT THAT MADE ME WHAT I AM--
MY TENTACLES AND I HAVE HAD A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 8-1

creature! Only Iron Man has the knowledge to stop the machine—and he's only got an hour to do it in ***Iron Man: Iron Protocols*** by *Robert Venditti & Nelson.*

Forget Halloween—Marvel's going straight to Christmas in the ***Marvel Holiday Spectacular***, featuring a heaping helping of Christmas-themed stories, both original and reprint.

Marvel Zombies Vs. Marvel Apes: That's the premise of ***Marvel Zombies: Evil Evolution***, a 64-page oneshot by *Karl Kesel & Rob DiSalvo.*

Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting continue their in-continuity expansion on the origins of the Marvelverse in ***The Marvels Project #3***, which lays the groundwork for the debut of Captain America while presenting Namor's arrival in New York.

The Mighty Avengers, the Young Avengers, the New Avengers, the Avengers Initiative... they're all here in ***Mighty Avengers #30***, joining together to fight the Unspoken in a tale by *Dan Slott, Christos Gage, & Sean Chen*—but which side will the Dark Avengers take?

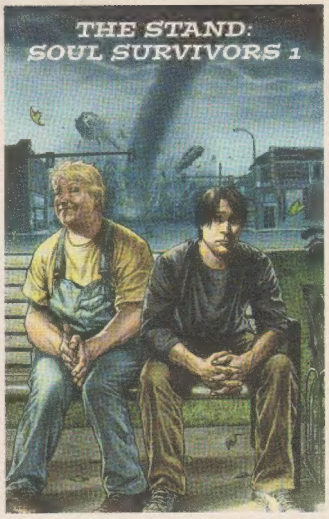
There's only room for one Ms. Marvel, and both Carol Danvers and Karla Sofen will kill to take the mantle. *Brian Reed & Sana Takeda* present the ultimate showdown of ***Dark Reign*** in ***Ms. Marvel #46***... and the last Ms. Marvel standing will face the surprise ending of the year!

The Punisher faces off against the Hood in ***Punisher #10*** by *Rick Remender & Tan Eng Huat.* The gloves are off and anything goes in this sadistic face-off as Frank Castle and Parker Robbins attempt to kill each other by tearing each other's souls apart. How much will Frank compromise to punish the guilty?

In ***Punisher: Frank Castle Max #75***, *Gregg Hurwitz, Charlie Huston, Peter Milligan, Tomm Coker, Ken Lashley, Goran Parlov,* and others offer five stories that reveal what really happened on the day that Frank Castle's family was slaughtered by the mob, leading to the birth of the Punisher. This issue also features a preview of *Jason Aaron & Steve Dillon's* upcoming ***Punisher Max #1.***

Marvel returns to the imaginative past that *Neil Gaiman* created when they launch *Jeff Parker & Ramon Rosanas'* ***Spider-Man 1602 #1.*** The Spider has reached manhood in the New World... but Norman Osbourne's treachery finds a way to spoil the young nation's peace and put Peter's life on a new course — back to Europe.

Tom DeFalco, Howard Mackie, & Todd Nauck continue their revelation of the original plans for one of Spidey's most controversial stories in ***Spider-Man: The Clone Saga #2.***



Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Mike Perkins continue the adaptation of *Stephen King's* tour de force in ***The Stand: Soul Survivors #1.***

Andy Diggle ends his run as writer with ***Thunderbolts #137***—but before he goes, he'll reveal the truth about Scourge, Black Widow II, and more.

After ten issues of taking on madmen and monsters around the globe, War Machine's quest for justice has finally forced the world to take action. But it's not the genocidists of Santo Marco or the murderous leaders of Eaglestar International in chains in the courtroom -- it's War Machine himself who's the criminal in *Greg Pak & Wellington Alves'* ***War Machine #11.***

All those take-offs of classic (and not so classic) works of art that appeared on Marvel's variant covers last spring are compiled in a single volume in the ***Wolverine Art Appreciation One-Shot.***

Spider-Man Family is gone... but you can welcome its replacement, ***Web of Spider-Man.*** Each monthly issue will present tales of Spider-Girl as well as members of Spidey's supporting cast.

Little X-Men! Big Adventure! Stars Reborn! Welcome to the world of ***X-Babies***, courtesy of *Greg Schigiel & Jacob Chabot.* Things have changed in Mojoworld as Mojo's been ousted by Mr. Veech, who's replaced the The X-Babies - the number one, top-rated stars - with something newer, safer, friendlier, and...more adorable! The X-Babies we know and love aren't going to sit by and let that happen. And how are the characters from Marvel's mid-'80s, kid-centric Star Comics line involved?

X-FACTOR 50

In ***X-Factor #50***, *Peter David & Valentine De Landro* present the conclusion to the year-long storyline that has revitalized the mutant team. Will the Summers Rebellion triumph as is supposed to happen...or will it be derailed? Will Madrox make it back to his own time? Will Siryn, Monet and the rest of the team have their final showdown with Cortex? Will we actually learn just how it is that Layla Miller knows stuff? Will someone die? You'll find out soon enough!...

The Agents of Atlas stand up against Marvel's mutants in ***X-Men Vs. Agents of Atlas***, a two-part series by *Jeff Parker & Carlo Pagulayan.* Venus has been kidnapped and the Agents will scour the Earth to find her!

Marvel collected volumes include:

- ***Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter: Guilty Pleasures—The Complete Collection HC***, collecting the twelve-part saga.
- ***Anita Blake Vampire Hunter: The Laughing Corpse Book 1—Animator TP***, collecting the five-parter.
- ***Beta Ray Bill: Godhunter TP***, collecting ***Godhunter #s 1-3*** and ***The Green of Eden.***
- ***Captain America: Road to Reborn Premiere HC***, collecting ***Cap #s 49, 50, 600, & 601.***
- ***Daredevil: Return of the King TP***, collecting ***Daredevil #s 116-119 & 500.***
- ***Dark Reign: Fantastic Four TP***, collecting the five-part miniseries.
- ***Dark Wolverine Volume 1: The Prince Premiere HC***, collecting ***Dark Wolverine #s 75-77*** and backup tales from ***Wolverine #s 73 & 74.***
- ***Essential Ghost Rider Volume 3 TP***, collecting ***Ghost Rider #s 51-65*** and more.
- ***Hulk Volume 3: Hulk No More Premiere HC***, collecting ***Hulk #s 10-13 & Incredible Hulk #600.***
- ***Invincible Iron Man Volume 2: World's Most Wanted Book 1 TP***, collecting ***IIM #s 8-13.***
- ***Kabuki: The Alchemy TP***, collecting ***Alchemy #s 1-9.***
- ***Lockjaw & the Pet Avengers HC***, collecting the four-part series with bonus material.
- ***Marvel 1602: New World/Fantastick Four Premiere HC***, collecting the two followup miniseries by *Greg Pak, Peter David, Greg Tocchini, & Pascal Alixe.*
- ***Marvel Masterworks: The Amazing Spider-Man Volume 3 TP***, collecting ***Amazing Spider-Man #s 20-30 & Annual #2.***
- ***Marvel Masterworks: Atlas Era Jungle Adventure Volume 1 HC***, collecting tales of Lorna from ***Lorna the Jungle Queen #s 1-5*** & ***Lorna the Jungle Girl #s 6-9.***
- ***Marvel Masterworks: Doctor Strange Volume***

IF I COULD GET MY CLAWS OUT--
I'D SHRED THESE SHACKLES LIKE CONFETTI!
NOT WHILE MY DEVICE IS DRAINING YOUR ENERGY!
NOW I'LL LEARN THE SECRET OF YOUR CLAWS!
--AND USE THAT SECRET TO MAKE MY TENTACLES INDESTRUCTIBLE!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 8-14
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I'M GLAD I STUCK A SPIDER TRACER ON WOLVERINE--
--'CAUSE I'VE A HUNCH HE MAY BE IN TROUBLE!
IT WAS VERY UNFRIENDLY OF YOU TO SLICE OFF ONE OF MY STEEL TENTACLES!
NO BIG DEAL, OCK.
NEXT TIME I'LL SLICE 'EM ALL OFF!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 9-23
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4 HC, collecting *Doctor Strange #s 180-183, Sub-Mariner #22, Incredible Hulk #126, Marvel Feature #1,* and *Marvel Premiere #s 3-8.*

•*Marvel Zombies 4 HC,* collecting the four-part miniseries.

•*Moon Knight Volume 5: Down South TP,* collecting *Moon Knight #s 25-30.*

•*New Avengers Volume 10: Power TP,* collecting *New Avengers #s 48-50 & Secret Invasion Dark Reign.*

•*Oz: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz HC,* collecting the eight-part adaptation.

OZ: THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ HC

•*Pride & Prejudice Premiere HC,* collecting the five-part adaptation.

•*Runaways: Rock Zombies TP,* collecting *Runaways V3 #s 7-10.*

•*Runaways Volume 9: Dead Wrong Digest,* collecting *Runaways V3 #s 1-6.*

•*Spider-Man: American Son Premiere HC,* collecting *Amazing Spider-Man #s 595-599* and bonus material.

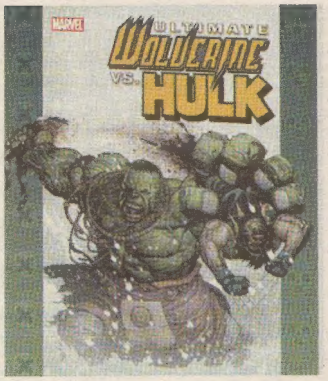
•*Spider-Man: Death & Dating Tp,* collecting *ASM #s 578-583 & 2006 Annual.*

•*Spider-Man: The Short Halloween Premiere HC,* collecting a variety of light-hearted Spidey tales including the title one-shot.

•*Thing: Project Pegasus Premiere HC,* collecting *Marvel Two-In-One #s 42-43 & 53-58.*

•*Thunderbolts: Burning Down the House TP,* collecting *Thunderbolts #s 126-129 & 132.*

•*Timestorm 2009/2099 HC,* collecting *Brian Reed's* miniseries along with the *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* specials.



•*Ultimate Wolverine Vs. Hulk Premiere HC,* collecting the six-part series that was literally years in the making!

•*Uncanny X-Men: Manifest Destiny TP,* collecting *Uncanny #s 500-503* and more.

•*War Machine Volume 1: Iron Heart TP,* collecting *War Machine #s 1-5* and more.

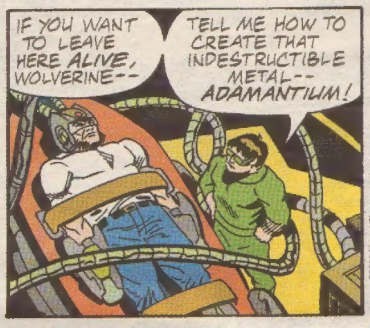
•*Wolverine Noir Premiere HC,* collecting the four-parter.

•*Wolverine: Old Man Logan HC,* collecting *Wolverine #s 66-72 & Old Man Logan Special.*

•*X-Men: Asgardian Wars HC,* collecting *X-Men/Alpha Flight #s 1 & 2, New Mutants Special Edition,* and *X-Men Annual #9.*

•*X-Men Forever Volume 1 TP,* collecting *X-Men Forever #s 1-5.*

FOLLOW SPIDER-MAN EVERY WEEK IN *COMIC SHOP NEWS!*



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PREVIEWS

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ON THE COVER ...

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PLANETARY #27—Over a decade in the making, ***Planetary #27*** is due this October, and creators Warren Ellis and John Cassaday are bringing their "long, strange trip" into the weird and wild regions of the Wildstorm Universe to its exciting conclusion!

COWBOY NINJA VIKING #1—Writer AJ Lieberman and artist Riley Rossmo bring us the story of a failed government project to turn Multiple Personality Disorder patients into counter-intelligence agents... Years later, someone has gathered these rejects into a band of disturbed-yet-effective assassins. Our only hope? The MPD known as ***Cowboy Ninja Viking!***

430+ pages of cool stuff that starts shipping in October!

CHECK OUT THESE OFFERINGS:

Groo: The Hogs of Horder #1—What happens when the most destructively inept swordsman comes nose-to-snout with an evil menace that spreads death and annihilation in its wake? Find out in the all-new mini-series from Dark Horse Comics and the award-winning guys who do *every* Groo mini-series: Sergio Aragonés and Mark Evanier!

Justice League of America #38—A new era opens for the World's Greatest Heroes as the creative team of writer James Robinson and artist Mark Bagley debuts! It all begins as a one-time member of the JLA falls before he can warn the team of looming peril, while what's left of the JLA journeys to the heart of their past to decide if the team has any future at all.

Haunt #1—*The Walking Dead's* Robert Kirkman teams up with *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane for **Haunt**, the story of a man dragged into a world of intrigue and espionage by his dead brother's ghost! Now he must solve his secret agent brother's murder and save the world — or die trying!

Daredevil #501—Following the cataclysmic events of issue #500, Matt Murdock finds himself in the toughest place of his life... forced to make the hardest decision he's ever made. Andy Diggle and Roberto De La Torre usher in a radically different chapter in Daredevil's adventures!

AND BE SURE NOT TO MISS:

- **Heroes of the DCU Series 2: Shazam! Bust** from DC Direct!
- **Marvel Minimates Series 31 & 32** from DST!
- **Sense & Sensibility & Sea Monsters** in the Books & Magazines Section!
- **Star Wars: Ralph McQuarrie Concept Action Figure Sets** in the Toys Section!
- **Magic the Gathering: Zendikar Expansion** in the Games Section!
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